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FEMALE RETALIATION,

P O E T I C A L E S S A Y.

B Y A M A N.

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T O T H E P U B L I C.

TH E Author confesses, that the greater part of the instances, used in the following Essay, is taken from Mr. WALSH's elegant Defence of Women, written in prose. — And he begs leave to add, that this short sketch is intended only as a hint of what might be done by a person, who may have fewer avocations, and more ingenuity than himself.

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FEMALE RETALIATION.

WITH Eve the first-born let my verse begin—

“ With Eve! the mother of detested sin!

“ On her a shameless panegyrick write!”

The snarling pedant vents his critic spite—

Far be't from me with soft'ning words to grace

That first corrupter of the human race!

But oh! reflect that the forbidden fruit,

Which tempted Eve, did not her sons pollute

And leave from sin's sad stain her daughters free!

All feel the poison of th' accursed tree.

Woman is subject to the calls of sense—

Why look in her for perfect innocence?

Shall man uncensur'd drench his hands in blood,

Barter for private gain the public good,

Revel at large in all th' excess of lust,
 While woman, form'd too from congenial dust,
 If once the paths of innocence she quit,
 Falls a sure prey to his opprobrious wit?
 To paint fair woman white as virgin snow,
 And man alone in blackest colours show
 Vain were the task, nor such the poet's view—
 As great her virtues, and her faults as few.

THO' Clytemnestra wish'd, too well we know,
 Her warlike husband in the shades below,
 With her let man the guilty burden share,
 For well we know, Egistheus sent him there.
 Tho' Thais might, in all her charms array'd,
 With beauty's luring eloquence persuade,
 'Twas Philip's son that with uplifted hand
 Toss'd 'gainst Persepolis the flaming brand.

THE Cholchian's dreadful tale when we review,
 See her in blood her furious hands embrue,
 A son's, or brother's mangled limbs disperse,
 (Horror subdues me, while I write the verse)
 Appall'd we cry, "Nought can a woman stay,
 "When love or vengeance points the murd'rous way?"

To

To female hearts are thoughts of blood confin'd,
 The offsprings only of a Woman's mind?
 Who hath not heard of altars oft' distain'd
 With slaughter'd guests, and dearest rites profan'd?
 Who hath not read with horror and surprise,
 How Nero, brute in human form's disguise,
 With barbarous steel dispos'd his mother's womb?
 Oh! had it been the savage monster's tomb!—
 And yet nor Nero, nor th' Egyptian king,
 By keen revenge, or love's envenom'd sting,
 To these black deeds of cruelty were urg'd.—
 'Twas blood they wish'd; they smil'd in blood immerg'd.

OFT gentle Ovid in his amorous strains
 Of fickle woman's perfidy complains.
 But does it not from his own lines appear,
 The poet lov'd some hundred in a year?
 Shall wild Alexis range from field to field,
 Suck each new sweet, that various herbs may yield,
 Free and inconstant as the fragrant bee---
 Then cry, "Dear Daphne, keep yourself to me?"

" BUT sure (says Crito, with contracted brow)
 " This well-known truth you cannot disallow;
 " That

“ That lewdness rankles in each female heart.”—
 Has then your wife too play'd the wanton's part?
 Must every woman, Crito, be a whore,
 Because rank Messalina was before?
 As well from stiff Priscilla you'd conclude,
 That every wishful widow is a prude.
 From bragging Thrafo you might prove as soon,
 That gallant Marlborough was a mere poltroon.—

Is man, pure man more prudent to assuage
 His lawless passion's all-subduing rage?
 Oh! let us not with foolish ardor trace,
 For man's own sake, the annals of his race!
 Left there a thousand Tarquins we should find
 For Messalina once in womankind!—

HUSH'd be that crime, the Sapphic passion call'd,
 At which affrighted nature stands appall'd,
 Left, when we think the Female Sex to wound,
 The dart, with equal force, on Man rebound.—
 'Tis said, alas! that many a Grecian sage
 Prefer'd a handsome to a homely page.

To rail at women authors have thought fit—
 Authors that had less gallantry than wit.

Behold!

Behold ! Simonides their mighty foe,
 Who aim'd at nine in ten a deadly blow,
 One species good, with all his spleen, allow'd ;
 The rest, he said, were fluttish, fickle, proud.---
 But whence this rancour in the Grecian's breast ?
 Was he with beauty as with learning blest ?---
 Well might his form the softer sex disgust,
 And, since he knew it might, he thought it must :
 Hence he resolv'd to ridicule those charms,
 That fled the nauseous circle of his arms.

Tho' in true colours Lucian boldly dress'd
 The griping bawd and courtezan profess'd,
 His milder wit has grac'd Panthea's name,
 And stamp'd her virtues with eternal fame.
 Grant then, ye Fair, the wicked Greek his due,
 Who treated Heav'n with less respect than you ;
 Scoff'd at Religion, made its rites a joke,
 Of mighty Gods irreverently spoke,
 A cryer one, one dubb'd an auctioneer,
 Nor spar'd their monarch in his loose career.

A Roman wit, and censor of his age,
 Who cuts offending man in every page,

Within one satire's limit has confin'd
(Not wont to spare) the vice of womankind.

BUT most at Woman the vain coxcomb rails,
Who dances, dresses, flirts to please---and fails :
With all the pangs of disappointment curst,
His coward heart with bitter malice burst,
He quits the maid, whom 'tis in vain to sue,
And gives to pride what is to virtue due,
Yet weak the efforts of a slighted beau,
Whose trade is folly, and whose idol show ;
His keenest strokes with highest praise abound,
And, where he means to praise, he's sure to wound.

YE woman-hating critics, dastard band,
Avaunt, or dread Pelides' mighty hand !
See ! now his eyeballs with resentment glow,
Now sink dejected in excess of woe,
His soft sighs floating in the passing wind—
But whence this tumult in a hero's mind ?
'Tis fair Briseis, ravish'd from his arms,
That moves these sighs, and kindles these alarms.

BUT who to Woman stricter reverence paid,
Than he, whom Heav'n of men the wisest made ?

To govern well was not his only care,
 The bad to punish, and the good to spare ;
 Woman his softer meditations shar'd,
 One voice the justest laws and warmest love declar'd.

NOR did the steady Grecian, who possess'd,
 Ev'n Christian virtues in a heathen breast,
 Who could by Nature's slender light descry
 A small faint glimmering of eternity,
 The Female Sex with all its charms deride,
 But ventur'd fearless on a second bride.—
 His pupil Plato knew his master's rule,
 Nor was for ever preaching in his school,
 Oft wou'd he quit the philosophic chair,
 And leave his own republic for the Fair.

WITH boundless stores of wond'rous knowledge fraught
 The Stagyrte to love, from reason, taught,
 Himself to Woman's charms a slave confess'd,
 And love the ruling monarch of his breast.
 Let rising statesmen by his precepts move,
 Nor dare to counsel, e'er they learn to love !

CEASE then to rail, ye churlish scatter'd few,
 A selfish, hopeless, disappointed crew,

Who,

Who, while fair Woman's vices you reveal,
 With equal pains her better side conceal,
 Whate'er is bad expose in glowing red,
 With deepest shade, whate'er is good, bespread.
 Know, that in every clime, in every age,
 The great, the brave, the poet, and the sage,
 Have deem'd, with reverence, Woman's charms divine,
 Nor blush'd to kneel at beauty's hallow'd shrine.

F I N I S

With boundless stores of wondrous knowledge fraught
 The Sages to love, from reason, taught
 Himself to Woman's charms a slave confess'd,
 And love the ruling monarch of his breast.
 Let rising greatness by his precepts move,
 Nor dare to counsel, else they learn to love!

Great then to rail, ye church's latter'd crew,
 A blith, hopeful, disappointed crew,

Who,